

NR 3-26-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS.

1 NAME

HISTORIC Ebenezer Camp Ground

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SE 1/4 of Sec 15, T8S, R28W

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Center Point

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

CODE

05

COUNTY

Howard

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

W. H. Hughes

STREET & NUMBER

100 South Main

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Howard County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE 1854
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ebenezer Camp Ground, one of the oldest surviving religious encampments in the southwestern United States, is a small forest clearing in which rough, wooden buildings are grouped about an open, central square. Six major structures currently line the perimeter of the square. **These buildings are divided among three dormitory ("tent") rows found on the north, east, and south edges of the camp ground, two minister's cabins located on the southern border of the clearing, and a small ancillary structure, positioned southeast of the minister's cabins. In the center of the square clearing there rests a large, rustic tabernacle.**

The number of structures to be found on the camp ground has varied throughout the past century because fire, wind and natural deterioration have destroyed a large number of buildings; and changing fashion, which has undermined the popularity of the "old-fashioned" camp meeting, has reduced the necessity for large numbers of "tent" dormitories.

Although the various structures that currently stand on the camp ground are of relatively recent construction (all have been erected since 1942), the construction principles that have been employed in rebuilding the dormitories, minister's cabins and ancillary structures have remained traditional. Some of the traditional elements are the use of hand-hewn, squared logs for upright supports, the continued presence of wide, rough, unpainted clapboard siding on the dormitories, and the adherence to traditional styles of design and massing. In fact, the existing buildings are not distinguishable from the much earlier ones described by J. J. Propps in an article on the Ebenezer Camp Ground, published in the 1974 Howard County Historical Journal.

The dormitories are long, rectilinear masses, composed of numerous, connected, individual units known as "tents." Each "tent" consists of four rooms divided by an open breezeway. **Three of the rooms are bedrooms, while the fourth is open on two sides and serves as a dining hall. A shed room and an open cooking pavilion are attached to the rear of each tent. No doors enclose the entranceway, and the windows are merely small rectangular cuts made into the clapboard siding. Gabled, tin roofs cover the length of the dormitories, and straw is used for the interior floor covering.**

The small, "squarish", one-room cabins which house the ministers during the camp meetings differ from the other structures in that vertical, pine-board siding is used rather than clapboarding.

The tabernacle is a large open pavilion composed of a low, hipped, tin roof set upon numerous squared-log post supports. **The seating is divided into four equal sections by perpendicular aisles which bisect in the center of the pavilion.**

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While the original structures of this historic camp ground have long since disappeared, the architecture has remained rustically traditional, making the existing structures replicas of those which housed previous generations of worshippers.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1854

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Like the chautauqua, the religious camp meeting is rapidly fading into the American past. The camp grounds on which these meetings were held each summer are also disappearing -- so much so, that only a handful of the numerous camp sites, which dotted the American southwest in the nineteenth century, survive. The Ebenezer Camp Ground is the oldest Methodist camp ground and perhaps the most famous of the few camp grounds that remain in Arkansas. It was not only a site of religious congregation, it also served as an important social and recreational center in an area where towns were few and small and families were widely scattered over the countryside.

The physical history of the Ebenezer Camp Ground is one dominated by wind and fire. Evolving out of the circuit church of John Henry, the first Methodist minister to preach in southwest Arkansas, the Ebenezer Camp Ground fulfilled the need for a permanent site of religious worship along the Arkansas frontier.

In 1837 the first buildings were erected on the camp ground, which was located at a spring near Center Point. These structures were destroyed by wind, and the camp site was moved one mile west to Red Hill, where in 1853 fire reduced the camp to ashes. Subsequently, several citizens of Center Point purchased forty acres of government land two miles north of Center Point and reestablished the Ebenezer Camp Ground at its present location. The new camp was burned during the Civil War and rebuilt in 1871. The camp has experienced two recent disasters. In 1942 the tabernacle was destroyed by wind, and in 1966 four of the other five structures were burned. All of the destroyed structures have been rebuilt in a traditional architectural mode, which utilizes square logs, rough unpainted clapboard siding, vertical pine-board siding and tin roofing. The aim and the achievement was to duplicate the rustic, frontier structures of the preceding century.

J. J. Propps in an article in the 1974 Howard County Historical Journal describes the typical camp meeting of two generations ago as being a mixture of religion, socializing and recreation. The religious program of a camp meeting consisted of regularly scheduled sermons delivered throughout the one or two weeks of the encampment and the giving of public testimony, in which individuals would verbally proclaim their religious faith before the assembled campers. The meeting was also considered a social occasion in that it facilitated courtship, family

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reunion and the renewal of friendship among the campers. Picnics, stories and the absence of farm chores added to the recreational flavor of the camp meeting.

A number of noted religious speakers have presided over the meetings at the Ebenezer Camp Ground. Perhaps the most famous was the Methodist minister Dr. Andrew Hunter, who lectured at the camp ground in the decade following the Civil War. Dr. James Anderson, an authority on Arkansas Methodism, considers Dr. Hunter to have been the most eloquent, as well as the most influential, Arkansas Methodist minister of the nineteenth century.

Seven rustic structures currently stand upon the Ebenezer Camp Ground. Three long clapboard dormitories, two small, square minister's cabins, and a small ancillary structure are ranged along the perimeter of a square forest clearing. In the center of the clearing rests a large tabernacle, which is composed of a tin gabled roof set upon squared-log support posts. A narrow, dirt road provides access to the clearing, which is set several hundred yards off the main highway. The setting and architecture appropriately represent the frontier heritage of the Ebenezer Camp Ground.

The Ebenezer Camp Ground is a reminder of America's rural past, a time when the loosely scattered nature of the population made the camp meeting an eagerly awaited event in which religion, socializing and recreation all combined to form a unique experience. As one of the oldest and best documented camp grounds still surviving in Arkansas, Ebenezer Camp Ground deserves prime consideration for its significance in the religious and social history of this state.

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Minutes of the 1932 camp meeting at the Ebenezer Camp Ground. In possession of W. H. Hughes, Nashville, Arkansas.

Propps, J. J. "The Ebenezer Camp Ground," The Howard County Historical Journal, (an annual publication), 1974.

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PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Ebenezer Camp Ground

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Center Point

VICINITY OF

COUNTY Howard

STATE Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Claudia Morrow

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

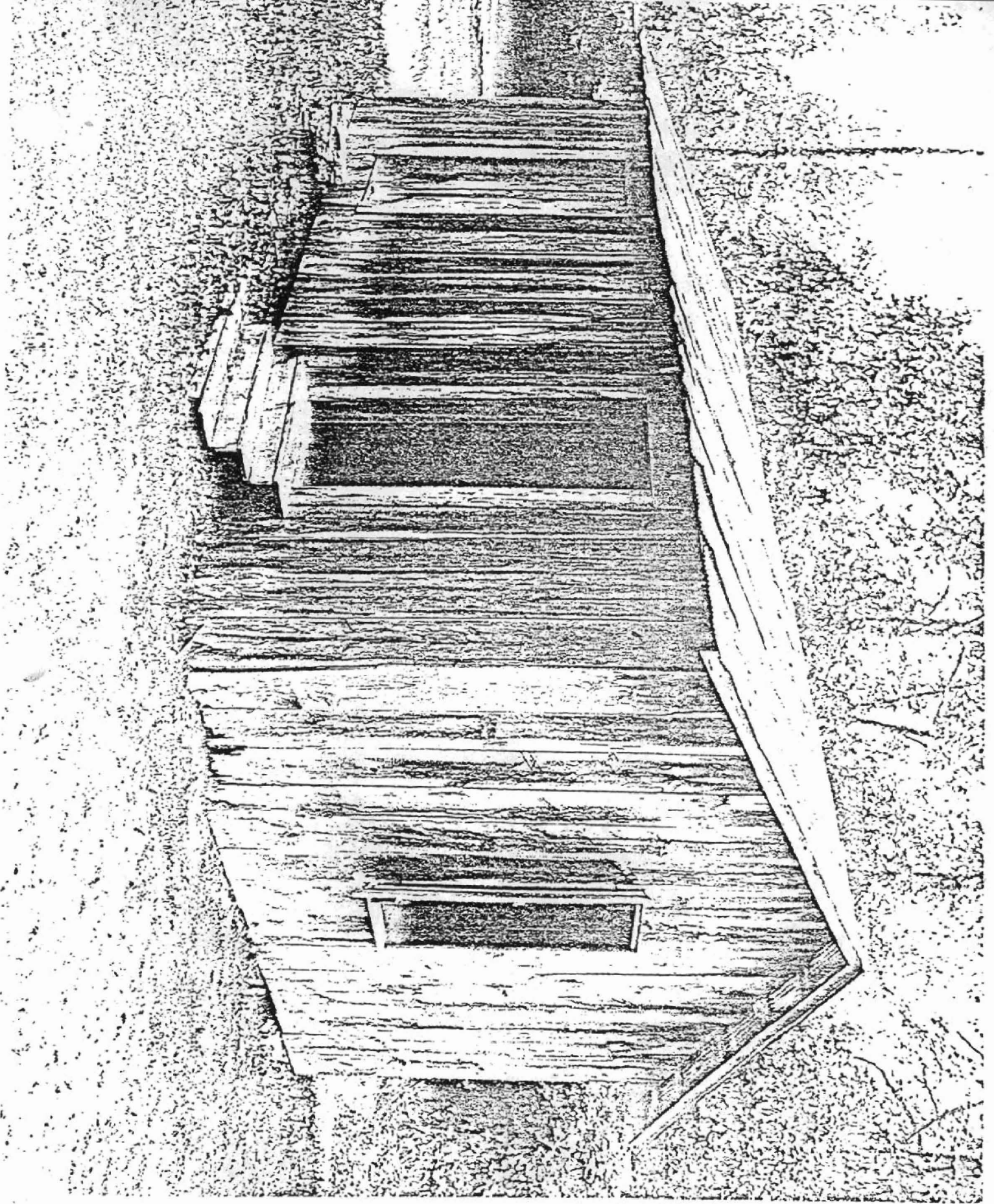
4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

one of the ministers' houses viewed from the northeast

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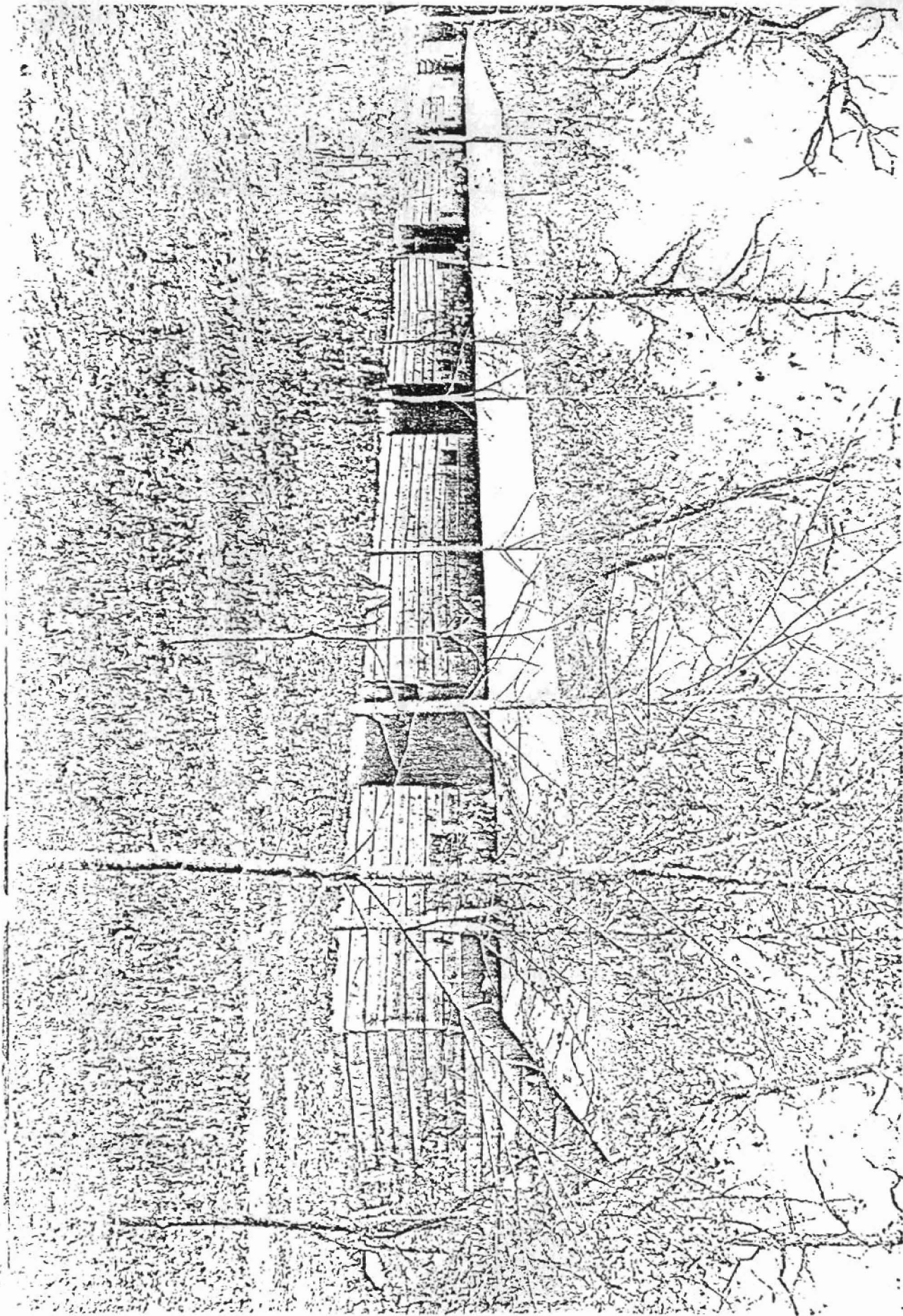
1 NAME
 HISTORIC Ebenezer Camp Ground

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
 CITY, TOWN Center Point VICINITY OF COUNTY Howard STATE Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
 PHOTO CREDIT Claudia Morrow DATE OF PHOTO 1975
 NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION
 DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET PHOTO NO.
 Tabernacle with dormitory seen in the rear viewed from the north 2





EBENEZER CAMP GROUND
CENTER POINT AR.
UTM REFERENCE:
15 / 411640 / 3768880

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(DIERKSI)

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Camp Ebenezer

Bishop

Oregon Branch

Wynn

Gravel Pit

